

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 3, line 22, as follows:

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Summary of the Invention

93 It is the objective of the invention to disclose a method of testing bonded connections that is directly integrated into the manufacturing process, as well as a wire bonder suitable for implementing this method, which enables real-time quality control and the immediate execution of quality-ensuring adjustment procedures while the bonding process is still under way.

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Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 3, line 29, as follows:

94 The objective is achieved with respect to a method of testing wire-bond connections between a bonding wire and a separate surface, in particular a bonding pad, which are produced by a bonding head with a bonding tool and a wire clamp associated with the bonding tool, wherein the wire-bond connections are produced under pressure, ultrasound, or heat. In one embodiment, the method comprises lifting the bonding head or the bonding tool a short distance away from the bonding site after the bonded connection has been created, fixedly gripping the bonding wire with the wire clamp, and raising the bonding head or the wire clamp with bonding wire gripped therein for a second distance during which process the tensile force acting on the bonding wire is detected.

In one aspect, raising the bonding head or the wire clamp for the second distance is calculated, in dependence on the structural features, so that a predetermined tensile force is exerted as a result of the raising, and an intact state of the bonded connection is detected during raising. In addition, the intactness of the bonded connection is determined by observing the time course of the tensile force acting on the wire clamp during the raising.

In one embodiment, a wire bonder in which there is integrated into a bonding head a testing arrangement for wire-bond connections between a bonding wire and a separate surface. Additionally, the bonding head comprises a tool or transducer holder to hold a bonding tool and a wire-clamp holder to hold a wire clamp for gripping a bonding wire, as well as a drive mechanism for the vertical displacement of the bonding head or tool holder and wire-clamp holder, and wherein a program control system to control a predetermined movement sequence of the bonding head or tool holder and wire-clamp holder is associated with the drive mechanism in

order to carry out a measurement of tensile force at the bonding wire, and a force measuring device is associated with the wire-clamp holder in order to measure a tensile force acting on a bonded connection to the bonding wire that has been produced.

a4 In one aspect, the wire-clamp holder is mounted on the bonding head so that it can be elastically deflected or linearly displaced against the action of a pretensioning element, and a force-measurement element or a strain gauge is associated with the holder. Additionally, the wire-clamp holder comprises a weakened preferential bending section or leaf-spring section, which ensures the elastic deflectability and in which the strain gauge is located. Furthermore, the program control system comprises a control program for automatically carrying out the method.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 1, follows:

a5 1009000330030102 The invention includes the idea of exposing a bonded connection to a tensile force immediately after it has been created, and of detecting its response. It further includes the idea that for this purpose the bonding tool and a wire clamp to grip the bonding wire should be moved in a suitable sequence of steps, in combination with a step in which the tensile force is measured, and the idea of disclosing a corresponding arrangement of a tool holder and a wire-clamp holder in combination with a control and evaluation means adapted thereto. One characteristic of the execution of the procedure is that the bonding wire is firmly gripped and pulled as soon as the bonded connection has been created (but after the contact between the bonded connection and the bonding tool has been broken), during simultaneous measurement of the tensile force.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 30, as follows:

a6 A testing arrangement suitable for implementing the proposed solution comprises the wire-clamp holder provided with an associated force-measuring element and a control device to control the movement pattern sketched out above, and represents an integrated component of an improved wire bonder.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on Page 5, line 18, as follows:

a7 Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1 illustrates a schematic drawing of one embodiment of a testing arrangement.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiment

Other advantages and useful features of the invention will be apparent from the subordinate claims and from the following description of a preferred exemplary embodiment with reference to Figure 1. This shows, in a schematic drawing, a testing arrangement 1 with components of the bonding head 3 of an ultrasonic wire bonder constructed in accordance with the invention. The elementary diagram refers to a bonding head of the kind described in the patent EP 0 857 535 A1, the structural details of which are not shown here. In the nature of a synoptic representation, function blocks are added with evaluation and control functions and symbols for the procedural steps.

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